

AN IMPORTANT MIDDLE BRONZE AGE CEMETERY AT WEST-CENTRAL ANATOLIA: DEDE MEZARI*

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ABSTRACT

Systematic work was performed at the Dede Mezari Cemetery in 2005-2006. We started with geodesic work and continued by laying grids in the planned excavation area. This excavation was carried out by the Afyonkarahisar Archaeological Museum with permission from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

In 2005-2006, an excavation was carried out at the Dede Mezari cemetery in Yukarı Çaybelen village, district of Bayat, province of Afyonkarahisar. The results show that this cemetery was in use from the beginning of the 2. Millenium B.C. to the middle of this millenium. There are some problems with this region of West-Central Anatolia concerning especially the Assyrian Trade Colonies Period and the Early Hittite Period. This research area is one of the few cemeteries dated to this period. The findings from this cemetery are contemporary with, and give the same results as, the findings at Yanarlar (10 km to the Northwest), at the Çavlum and Demircihöyük-Sarıket cemeteries in Eskişehir.

Drawing the cadastre began only recently and property maps have not yet been prepared. Points P.30, P.31 and P.39 were used in the topography, and grids were laid out. over the whole of the Dede Mezari. In addition, a 10m x 10m. plan of the 200m x 200m area was prepared.

We continued with geophysical work in an area of 4500 m² where the excavation would be carried out. This helped us to determine the first area to be excavated.

We took three human bone fragments from graves which were analyzed by the Beta Analytic Radiocarbon Dating Laboratory. According to these analyses, the samples from the graves date to between 1950-1520 B. C. These radiocarbon analyses concur with our evaluation of the archaeological findings.

1. LOCATION OF THE DEDE MEZARI CEMETERY

The Köy Kalesi settlement is located 500 m west of Yukarı Çaybelen Village (Yukarı Maçaklı), 50 m west of the Cevizli road and 30 m east of the Havuzun Başı Deresi (Map)(Koçak, 2004, 48). There is some agricultural activity on the settlement. The field extends from northwest to southeast (N. 38°50.072; E: 030°55.631; h: 1300). The length northwest-southeast is 160 m, the length southwest-northeast is 110 m and the elevation is 21 m. There are Bronze Age sherds and stone implements here. The Köy Kalesi has to be the settlement of the Dede Mezari Cemetery, because of its localization and findings dating to the Middle Bronze Age (MBA).

Gavur İni Önü Cemetery was another field examined in the Köy Kalesi area. It is situated on a slope 200 m. south of the Köy Kalesi settlement and 600 m west of Yukarı Çaybelen. An Early Bronze Age (EBA) large pithos graves and sherds were found here.

Dede Mezari Cemetery is 400 m west of Yukarı Çaybelen, on the ridge of the Havuzun Başı Deresi and 400 m southeast of the Köy Kalesi mound. This excavation conducted under the supervision of the Afyon Archaeological Museum demonstrates that this may be a MBA cemetery (Figure 1, Map, Plan).

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Figure 1: Dede Mezari

There are important MBA cemeteries in West-Central Anatolia and in Western Anatolia. The most important of them is Yanarlar Cemetery, which is situated 10 km northwest of Yukarı Çaybelen (Emre, 1978, 65). Besides this, the Çavlum Cemetery 16 km east of Eskişehir is another which yields characteristic regional MBA materials (Bilgen, 2002, 60; Bilgen, 2004, 142, Bilgen, 2005, 44). There are also findings dated to this period in Kusura, 45 km southwest of Afyonkarahisar.

Yanarlar, Çavlum, Sarıket and Dede Mezari are contemporary sites and their findings are similar. One may say that these yielded unique materials characteristic of the MBA that are uncommon in this part of Anatolia (Emre, 1978, 15 ff; Bilgen, 2002, 60; Bilgen, 2004, 139 ff). Asarcık, Bozyer and Dura Yeri are the other cemeteries and settlements in the region, which broaden our knowledge about the West-Central Anatolian MBA cultures (Özgül, 1974, 151; Lloyd-Mellaart, 1965, 76 ff).

2. GEODESIC AND GEOPHYSICAL STUDIES

Systematic work was performed at the Dede Mezari Cemetery in 2005. We started with geodesic work and continued by laying grids in the planned excavation area. This excavation was carried out by the Afyonkarahisar Archaeological Museum with permission from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

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3. THE EXCAVATION OF DEDE MEZARI CEMETERY 2006

The excavation studies were planned in two regions 10x10 m size at the Dede Mezari Cemetery in 2006 and the it has been performed successfully.

One of them was placed in 307-308/ 323-324 plan squares and called E trench (Figure 2, Plan).

The other was placed in 197-198/ 223-224 plan square and called as F trench (Figure 4, Plan)

Trench E

E1 pithos grave was located in the northwest of Trench E. This grave was destroyed by illegal excavators. In the deep part of this grave there was a pot made of clay. We discovered three bronze rings in the same place.



Figure 2: Trench E

The two parallel and adjacent huge stones were dug out in the west-southwest of Trench E. This is the cemetery of E2 cist grave (Figure 3). A breaking over the geologic filling which was discovered has an oval shape. The base of this grave was discovered over a flattened cist layer. Flat, huge and block stones were used around the four sides of the grave. There is an obstacle (rubble) caused by huge stones leaning to the southeast of the grave. We discovered bone fragments in the east side of the grave.



Figure 3: E2 cist grave

We discovered a pithos grave (E3) which was partly destroyed in the middle of Trench E. The fragments of the bones alone were just recognized in the pithos grave. The part of the mouth was covered by the stones.

A destroyed pithos grave (E4) was discovered in the south-middle of Trench E. There were huge stones on the upper side

of the pithos grave. Bone fragments were discovered. The pithos grave was located over a region in which an oval-shaped grave hole was being dug up. The grave was destroyed from illegal excavators. The fragments of a pithos which was completely oxide was discovered in the grave hole.

The findings of stones and bones in the northeast corner of the Trench E indicate that there might have been a double buried grave (E5).

Trench F

F1 pithos grave was located in the southeast corner of the Trench F. The rim of pithos was surrounded and supported by stones. The body of the pithos extended to the bottom of the cist layer. Bone fragments and metal pieces were discovered.

F2 buried grave was constructed in a rectangle hollow by digging the geologic filling in the east-middle of Trench F. And it was covered by three flat stones. Sherds of potteries were discovered over the rock-carved grave. In this simple grave a human skeleton was discovered.

F3 pithos grave was located in the northeast corner of the Trench F and was probably destroyed by illegal excavators. Some sherds of potteries and bones fragments were found here.



Figure 4: Trench F

F4 pithos grave was located in the southwest corner of the Trench F. The rim of the pithos was surrounded and supported by stones.

We dug in the F5 pithos grave in the middle northwest of Trench F. We discovered decorated metal ornaments, a piece of needle and pieces of beads. Also three potteries were discovered on the rim of the F5 pithos (Figure 5).

We dug in the F6 simple grave in the northwest corner of Trench F. The grave was located over a region in which an oval-shaped cist layer was dug up and the upper side was covered by stones. An extramural buried grave was discovered.

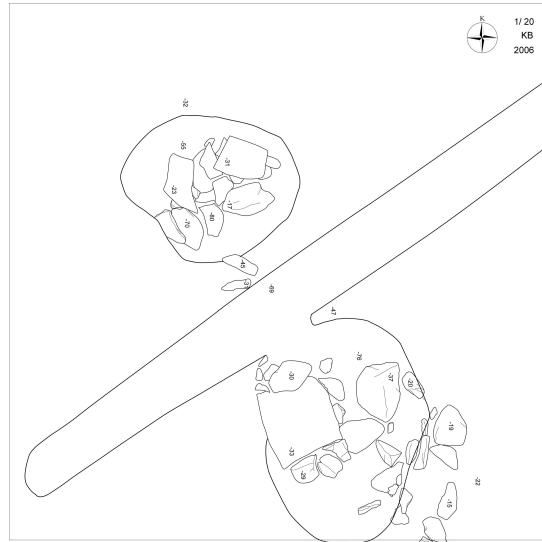


Figure 5: Northwest side of Trench F

There was a F8 pithos grave next to the F5 pithos grave (Figure 5, 6). This pithos was situated in an area which was acquired by the excavating of the cist layer according to the shape of pithos. Also a second pithos was inserted into this pithos. We discovered cremation remains and next to them were pieces of beads.



Figure 6: F8 pithos grave

There were three canals, extended to the southwest-northeast in a parallel way in the Trench F. The MBA graves were not demolished by the canals. The graves were almost connected to each other. Learning the functions of the canals left us in vain. Further information may be obtained after excavations that will be carried out in a future.

The discovered bones were examined by the team from the anthropology Department of Ankara University.

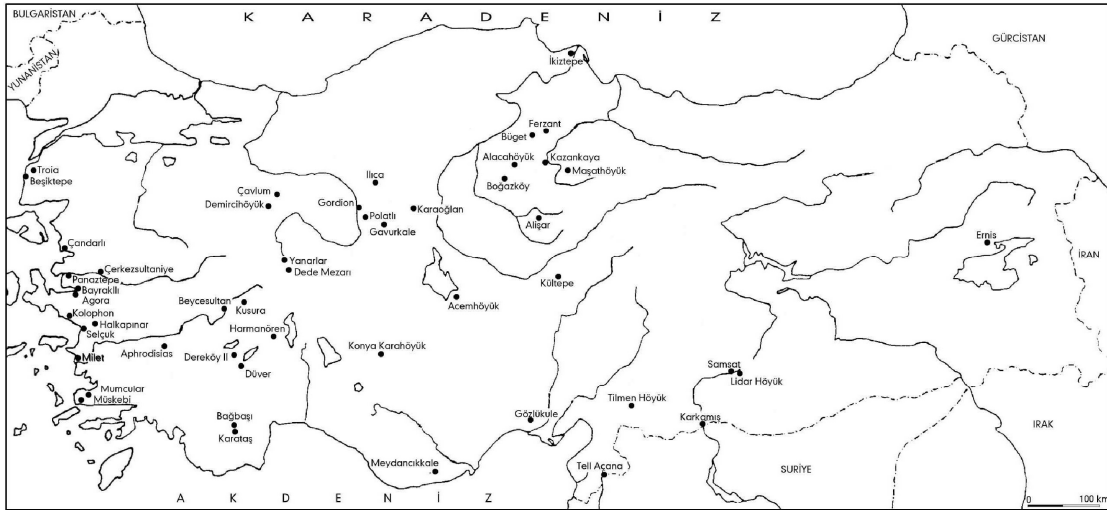
4. CONCLUSION

Our excavation area, Dede Mezarı Cemetery, is located on the Paşadağ range. The fields of the cemeteries in this region have similar geographical shapes and yield similar materials, which lead us to the conclusion that there was once a common cultural MBA group in the eastern part of the Afyon region. These components were spread across a wide area as in the findings at Kütahya and Eskişehir.

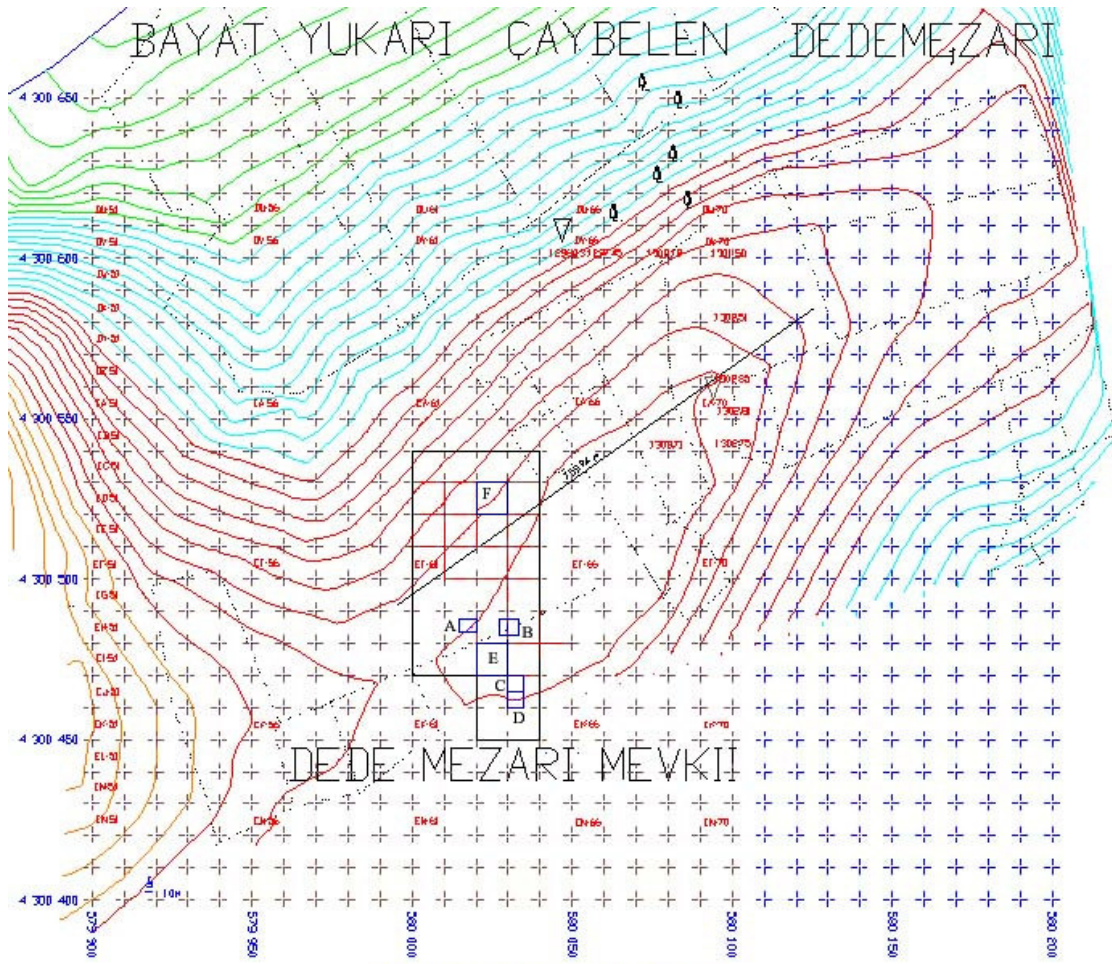
There are many MBA necropolises and settlements in Paşadağ and its surroundings where there are the necropolises of Yanarlar and Dedemezarı around it in the East of Afyon. Asarcık, Bozyer, Dura Yeri, Çalışlar are the main necropolis areas and Köy Kalesi, Asarcık Höyük (Bayat), Söğütlüpınar (Bayat), İnerönü (İscehisar Doğlat Village), Çalışlar (İscehisar Çalışlar Village), Çayır 1 (Emirdağ Gözeli Village) are the main settlements from these. Apart from these, as we have enlighten above, it is known that many findings in this period and region were handed over to the Archaeological Museum in Afyon. Contrary to the thoughts, this region had intensity in settlement and limited knowledge of the region about MBA is due to the lack of surveys.

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Map: Some Important Necropolis in Turkey (Akyurt, 1998, map 1)



Plan: Dede Mezari Necropolis area